

# Elevation Proves Mitigation Works

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*Editor's note: Across Louisiana, residents are rebuilding from damaging floods or taking steps to protect themselves against the next time disaster strikes. FEMA takes an occasional look at ways residents have built back to create a more resilient Louisiana.*

**BATON ROUGE, La.** – Melvin Vining elevated his Ponchatoula home not knowing South Louisiana was about to be hit with one of the worst floods in its history six months later.

Vining has lived in his home for 36 years. It's located a mile from Bedico Creek, which flows into the Tangipahoa River. Flooding has been a problem for Vining. In fact, his home flooded during Hurricane Rita in 2005, Hurricane Ike in 2008 and Hurricane Isaac in 2012.

Vining had tried before to protect his property. In 2009 he built a levee around the house.

"This helped with minor flooding issues but not against Hurricane Isaac," said Vining.

In 2016 he decided to elevate his home. He took advantage of FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, administered by the state. The agency paid 75 percent of the \$217,000 price tag.

Construction began in December 2015. The structure was lifted six feet above the base flood elevation. It wasn't long after the newly-elevated home was put to the test. His family home remained dry even though most of his neighborhood was severely damaged.

Vining estimates that if he had not elevated the home, he would have received as much as 16" of rain during the August floods.

"This water surpassed Hurricane Isaac flood levels that devastated the area," Vining said.



“I also urged my daughter, who built her home next door, to elevate during the construction process. She took my advice, and her home was also spared during the August floods.”

For ideas and tips on building stronger, more disaster-resistant homes, go to: [www.fema.gov/protecting-homes](http://www.fema.gov/protecting-homes)

Residents continuing to rebuild after the 2016 floods and need assistance are encouraged to look into the Restore Louisiana's Homeowner Assistance program. Start by completing the online survey at [restore.la.gov](http://restore.la.gov).

